

## Chapter 10

### Objectives, Policy, and Scope of Operation

#### Mission Statement

The principal mission of the Rocky Mountain Area Interagency Coordination Center (RMC) is to provide safe, cost effective, and timely response of national and area resources for all aspects of wildland and prescribed fire management activities and other emergency management activities within the Rocky Mountain Area (RMA). RMC's coordination effort will also be in cooperation with the National Interagency Coordination Center (NIC). This mission shall be accomplished through extensive planning, situation analysis, needs projection, and activation of emergency resources through interagency cooperation.

The RMA boundary is the Region 2 USFS boundary. This includes the states of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

The cooperating protection entities include:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (Southwest, Rocky Mountain, and Great Plains Regions)
- Bureau of Land Management (Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (Mountain/Prairie Region)
- Forest Service (Rocky Mountain Region)
- National Park Service (Intermountain Field Area, Midwest Regional)
- States include Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming)
- Local Agency Cooperators

The Rocky Mountain Area Interagency Mobilization Guide (RMG) identifies policy and agreements that establish standard procedures that guide the operations of multi-agency/jurisdictional logistical support activities. The guide is an extension of Agency Manuals, Handbooks, Directives, and Instructional Memorandums relating to logistical support. The guide is intended to promote uniformity of logistical support communications, facilitate interagency dispatch coordination, and ensure that the most timely and cost effective support services are provided. It is designed to accommodate amendments and will be recognized as currently applicable until amended. Dispatch centers should supplement the area guide with site-specific information and provide RMC with a current copy of their guide by May 15 of each year.

Agency Administrators must approve any changes to Chapter 10 Policy.

The Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group (RMCG) is responsible for review and approval of Procedures (Chapter 20), Organization (Chapter 30), and Cooperation (Chapter 40).

The Rocky Mountain Coordination Center is responsible for the Rocky Mountain Area Interagency Mobilization Guide review and approval of Chapters 50 through 90, as well as the development and implementation of Chapters 10 through 90.

## **Total Mobility**

Total mobility will be accomplished by the positioning and utilization of resources to meet anticipated and existing incident, preparedness, severity, wildland, and prescribed fire needs regardless of geographic location or agency affiliation. The closest forces concept will be utilized during initial attack, and when appropriate during extended attack.

## **Priorities**

When competition exists for wildland fire resources, the Center Manager shall establish priorities during Preparedness Levels I-II. Preparedness Level III is established through the Center Manager and the RMCG Fire Duty Officer. The Multi-Agency Coordination Group (MAC) or RMCG establishes priorities during Preparedness Levels IV-V. Priorities shall be established through use of National Standards (Refer to NMG 10). When requested, a priority list shall be submitted to RMC by Dispatch Center sub-geographic MAC/Center Manager.

The single overriding suppression priority is the protection of human life – both that of our firefighters and of the public.

Initial Attack capability should always be maintained.

### **In setting priorities, the following criteria should be considered:**

1. Maintaining initial action capability
2. Life safety / threats to life
3. Threats to property
  - a. Community infrastructure
  - b. Historically significant cultural resources
  - c. Principal residence
  - d. Non-principal residence
  - e. Out-buildings
  - f. Forest / range improvements
4. Threats to natural resources
5. High value (\$) resources
6. Threatened and endangered species habitat
  - a. Critical habitat
  - b. Key habitat
7. Sensitive species habitat
8. Critical winter range
9. Other
  - a. Limiting costs without compromising safety
  - b. Meeting agency suppression objectives
  - c. Support to National Response Framework (NRF) taskings

**Local and Geographic Area Drawdown Levels and National Ready Reserve**  
(Refer to NMG 10, RMG 20)

## **Scope of Operation**

**National Response Framework (NRF)**

(Refer to NMG 10)

**Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)**

(Refer to NMG 10)

**Response to Incidents Other Than Wildland Fires**

The Rocky Mountain Area Coordination Center (RMC) is capable of supporting non-fire incidents provided there are Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) in place that identify payment procedures.

RMC shall be the contact and coordination point for support to the National Federal Response Plan (Public Law 93-288, as amended). This plan is designed to address the consequences of any disaster or emergency situation in which there is a need for federal response assistance under the authority of the Stafford Act. The plan applies to natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, tornadoes, floods, and volcanic eruptions; technological emergencies involving radiological or hazardous material releases; and other incidents requiring Federal disaster assistance. The plan describes the basic mechanisms and structures by which the Federal government will mobilize resources and conduct operations in order to augment state and local response efforts.

Rocky Mountain Area Cooperating Agencies will normally function in a support role in a coordinated response to non-wildland fire emergencies. An agency may take the lead role for purposes of expediency in life-threatening situations or when non-Government Emergency Service Programs are not capable of providing support. Specific agency policies and administrators will provide direction in determining the availability of resources in conjunction with existing programs in order to support and coordinate with local authorities. Ensure that appropriate agreements are in place before taking action.

**Mutual Aid Agreements**

Mutual aid agreements have the primary purpose of providing Initial Attack (I.A.) and short-term logistical support between adjoining units and dispatch centers. Initial Attack is the first response of suppression forces dispatched to wildfires under established and planned direction. These forces are normally sufficient to successfully achieve the appropriate management response without need for major reinforcements in a reasonable period of time. Rocky Mountain Area units and dispatch centers have the authority to utilize the resources of adjoining units and centers within the RMA (Refer to RMG 20). Rocky Mountain Area units and dispatch centers have the authority to utilize the Initial Attack resources of adjoining units and centers across adjacent geographic area boundaries, according to existing border agreements.

Mobilization will be within the legal authority of existing formalized parent agreements. Local formal agreements and MOUs are not necessary (Refer to RMG 40). However, cooperating units and centers will specifically identify operating procedures in local operating plans (Refer to RMG 10 for I.A. definitions and policies).

Prior to the mobilization of I.A. resources, it is agreed that:

- An official resource request will be processed through dispatch channels for I.A. resources remaining on the incident beyond I.A., and
- No I.A. resource responding across geographic boundaries will be mobilized further than that adjoining center's boundary without approval from home unit.

### **Responsibilities of the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center**

Rocky Mountain Coordination Center (RMC) shall serve as the Area Coordination Center to provide logistical support to dispatch centers in the Rocky Mountain Area. RMC will coordinate movement of all support resources across jurisdictional boundaries within the Area. (Refer to RMG 20)

The Center Manager has delegated authority from Federal and State Land Management Agencies as identified by signatories of the Rocky Mountain Area Interagency Mobilization Guide. The delegated authority is outlined within this Guide and establishes policies and procedures for the mobilization of personnel, equipment, supplies, and aircraft for incident emergencies and preparedness in the Rocky Mountain Area and nationally.

RMC shall:

- Provide a focal point for information concerning overall incident situations within the Rocky Mountain Area including but not limited to, fire danger, current or projected activity, and resource status.
- Determine the amount and location of available overhead, crews, equipment, aircraft, supplies, and transportation. Anticipate and communicate initial and long-term needs and priorities for sharing available resources.
- Coordinate the movement of resources for emergencies, preparedness, severity, wildland, and prescribed fire needs from one geographic location to another.
- Coordinate with the RMCG Fire Duty Officer or MAC Coordinator to determine priorities for resources in multiple fire situations. (Refer to Responsibilities of the RMCG Fire Duty Officer, RMG 10)
- Coordinate rosters, schedules, and mobilization of RMA and National resources (i.e., Type 1 and 2 Incident Management Teams, Buying Teams, Crews, etc).
- Keep agency administrators, RMCG members, Unit FMOs, and NICC informed of existing and projected critical fire situations.
- Determine the need to preposition suppression resources at the most strategic locations and initiate their movement through the use of the resource order process in conjunction with RMCG and local FMOs.
- Monitor dispatch organizations for compliance in meeting acceptable dispatch standards.
- Participate in active analysis of fire, coordination, and dispatch activities.
- Serve as information and technical advisor to RMCG at their meetings.
- Serve as information/technical advisors to RMA Operations Committee at meetings.
- Prior to fire season, initiate RMCG recommended changes in policies, procedures, and Cooperative Agreements that affect RMA operations.
- Provide leadership and support in training programs to facilitate current dispatch and coordination needs.

## **Responsibilities of the Rocky Mountain Agencies**

(In concert with agency manuals and directives)


Rocky Mountain Agencies shall be responsible for:

- All fire activity within their respective protection boundaries including initial attack and project support.
- Interagency agreements to facilitate a cost effective and responsive emergency management program, and the development of Mobilization Guides, Operating Plans, Aviation, and Safety Plans.
- Preparedness in order to meet daily-anticipated fire suppression requirements.
- Mobilization and dispatching of Agency requested resources.
- Ensuring adequate and timely staffing of all incidents through the Interagency Dispatch System. This includes overhead team requirements (complexity analysis) and Expanded Dispatch Organization.
- Maintaining all equipment and supplies to Agency and National Fire Equipment Standards.
- Assessing and performing risk/benefit analysis prior to requesting extensive night mobilization.
- Ensuring that all resource requests are filled with fully qualified personnel.
- Adequately informing RMC of all intelligence regarding resources, weather, and incident information. This includes anticipated critical fire situations or fire activity that may exhaust unit response capabilities.
- Complete and accurate documentation in support of emergency activities and legal requirements.
- Administrative details including training, contracting, discipline, housing, timekeeping, equipment, supplies, and any project work for shared resources based on the unit.
- Determining needs for pre-positioning of forces or deviations from approved and published staffing levels, and taking appropriate action. (This includes obtaining severity authorization approval and initiating resource order requests through appropriate dispatch channels.)
- The active support of incidents by making qualified personnel available for wildland and prescribed fire activities.
- Providing the training and support to wildland and prescribed fire personnel to ensure safe, efficient, and effective incident activities.
- Providing a RMCG Fire Duty Officer for each agency as needed.

## **Responsibilities of the RMCG Fire Duty Officer**

The RMCG Fire Duty Officer shall:

- Serve as liaison between the RMCG and RMC.
- Provide general oversight and support to RMC.
- Serve as a point of contact for the Center Manager, National MAC Group, agency administrators, and others, as circumstances dictate.
- Assist the RMC Center Manager as needed with problem solving and decision support.

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- Serve as a liaison (or ensures a liaison from the RMA Operations Committee is provided) for coordination between assigned out of Geographic Area Incident Management Teams (IMT) and local agency administrator.
  - Be replaced when the MAC Coordinator position is established. (See RMG 30)
  - Monitor preparedness levels in consultation with RMC Center Manager, paying particular attention to up or down trends in Preparedness Level 3.
  - Serves as liaison between a FAST Team and Agency Administrators.

### **Mobilization / Demobilization**

The Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) will be used for all movement of resources and serve as a legal payment document.

A dispatch center plans and executes a safe, rapid mobilization/demobilization program to minimize fire costs, commensurate with values at risk, and consistent with all agencies' resource management objectives. When a dispatch center has depleted jurisdictional and mutual aid resources, requests for assistance shall be placed first with their "neighbors" and second with RMC. The resource order form as described above will be used. The coordination center shall, through established dispatch channels, locate and order the closest available resource that will meet the requesting unit's needs. Consideration shall be given to more distant resources to avoid excessive commitments from units with similar or more critical fire severity.



### **The following mobilization hierarchy will be honored:**

- 1. Agency**
- 2. Cooperators**
- 3. AD/EFF**
- 4. Contractors**

Units responding to RMA requests are responsible for ensuring the resources dispatched meet the criteria specified in the RMG and/or the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Qualification and Certification Handbook (NWCG, PMS 310-1).

### **Work/Rest, Length of Assignment, and Days Off**

#### **Work/Rest Guidelines**

Work/rest guidelines should be met on all incidents. Plan for and ensure that all personnel are provided a minimum 2:1 work to rest ratio (for every 2 hours of work or travel, provide 1 hour of sleep and/or rest).

Work shifts that exceed 16 hours and/or consecutive days that do not meet the 2:1 work/rest ratio should be the exception, and no work shift should exceed 24 hours. However, in situations where this does occur (for example, initial attack), incident management personnel will resume 2:1 work/rest ratio as quickly as possible.

The Incident Commander or Agency Administrator must justify work shifts that exceed 16 hours and those that do not meet 2:1 work to rest ratio. Justification will be documented in the daily incident records. Documentation shall include mitigation measures used to reduce fatigue. The Time Officer's/Unit Leader's approval of the

Emergency Firefighter Time Report (OF-288), or other agency pay document, certifies that the required documentation is on file and no further documentation is required for pay purposes.

The work/rest guidelines do not apply to aircraft pilots assigned to an incident. Pilots must abide by applicable Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines, or agency policy if more restrictive.

### **Length of Assignment**

**Assignment Definition** - An assignment is defined as the time period (days) between the first full operational period at the first incident or reporting location on the original resource order and commencement of return travel to the home unit. Refer to NMG 10 and IIBMH 10, Section 12.7-2 for further information.

**Length of Assignment** - Standard assignment length is 14 days, exclusive of travel from and to home unit, with possible extensions identified below.

Time spent in staging and preposition status counts toward the 14-day limit, regardless of pay status, for all personnel, including incident management teams. Refer to the NMG 10, 20, and IIBMH 10, Section 12.7-2 for further information.

**Days Off** - After completion of a 14 day assignment and return to the home unit, two mandatory days off will be provided (2 after 14) (State regulations may preclude authorizing this for State employees). Days off must occur on the calendar days immediately following the return travel in order to be charged to the incident. If the next day(s) upon return from an incident is/are a regular work day(s), a paid day(s) off will be authorized. Refer to the NMG 10, and IIBMH 10, Section 12.7-2 for further information.

**Assignment Extension** - Prior to assigning incident personnel to back-to-back assignments, their health, readiness, and capability must be considered. The health and safety of incident personnel and resources will not be compromised under any circumstance.

Assignments may be extended when:

- Life and property are imminently threatened,
- Suppression objectives are close to being met, or
- Replacement resources are unavailable, or have not yet arrived.

Upon completion of the standard 14 day assignment, an extension of up to an additional 14 days may be allowed (for a total of up to 30 days, inclusive of mandatory days off, and exclusive of travel).

Upon release from the assignment, regardless of extension duration, two (2) mandatory days off will be provided immediately following the return to the home unit and chargeable to the incident.

The Assignment Extension Form is required to be completed with the appropriate signatures.

The form can be found electronically at:

[http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/coord\\_forms/Extension\\_form.pdf](http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/coord_forms/Extension_form.pdf)

(Refer to the RMG 20, NMG 10, and IIBMH 10, Section 12.7-2 for further information)

## **Incident Operations Driving**

(Refer to NMG 10)

### **Initial Attack Definition**

Initial Attack (I.A.) is defined as the first response of suppression forces dispatched to wildfires under established and planned direction. The forces are normally in sufficient amounts to successfully achieve the appropriate management response without need for major reinforcements in a reasonable period of time. The closest forces concept will be utilized during initial attack, and when appropriate during extended attack. (Also refer to RMG 10 Mutual Aid Agreements)

Dispatching of National and/or Area initial attack resources within and across the defined Rocky Mountain Area boundaries shall comply with the following:

- Rocky Mountain Area units and dispatch centers have the authority to utilize the resources of adjoining units and centers within the RMA as stated in the RMA Neighborhood Ordering Procedures RMG 20.
- Rocky Mountain Area units and dispatch centers have the authority to utilize the Initial Attack resources of adjoining units and centers across adjacent geographic area boundaries.
- Mobilization will be within the legal authority of existing formalized parent agreements. Local formal agreements and MOUs are not necessary. However, cooperating units and centers must specifically identify operating procedures in local operating plans.
- Initial attack aircraft such as air tankers, helicopters, lead planes, smokejumper aircraft, etc., are considered resources that can be dispatched and arrive on scene within one hour of I.A. request.
- Initial attack ground resources are considered resources that can be dispatched and arrive on scene within three hours of I.A. request.
- Dispatch centers must make notification of National and Area resource commitment as outlined in RMG 10.
- At such time as it becomes evident that the incident will not be contained or controlled during I.A., the initial attack resources shall be formally requested on resource order(s) through established dispatch channels.

When the RMA reaches Preparedness Level III, the RMC Center Manager and the RMC Fire Duty Officer will determine the need for prioritization of available National and Area resources. RMC has the authority to withdraw Neighborhood Ordering within the RMA and/or I.A. resources movement across geographic boundaries as necessary.



**Resource Mobilization**

The Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) will be used for all movement of resources and serve as a legal payment document. Orders for resources shall be initiated/generated by the unit responsible for the incidents (prescribed fire, wildland fire, non-fire, etc). Orders shall be processed through established dispatch channels using the standard National Coordination System. (Refer to NMG 10)

All resources mobilized beyond Initial Attack at their local area level will adhere to NWCG Physical Fitness Standards.

**National Resources**

(Refer to NMG 10)

National Resources are those fire suppression resources whose primary duties are for the National support of fire incidents. These resources have high demand, limited availability, and unique status reporting requirements identified by NICC.

**Teams:**

National Interagency Management Teams (Type 1 & NIMO)

Area Command Teams

National Buying Teams

**Aircraft:**

National Contract Airtankers

National Contract Lead Planes

National Aerial Supervision Module (ASM)

Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS)

National Contract Type 1 and Type 2 Helicopters

Smokejumper Aircraft

National Contract Infrared Aircraft

Large Transport Aircraft

**Crews:**

Type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC)

**Overhead:**

Smokejumpers

**Equipment:**

National Contract Mobile Shower Facilities

National Contract Mobile Food Services Unit

**Supply:**

National Incident Radio Support Cache (NIRSC)

Critical Cache Items

NFES Managed Items

National Interagency Support Cache (NISC) System

Incident Remote Automatic Weather Station

**Area Resources**

Area Resources are those fire suppression resources whose primary duties are for the Rocky Mountain Area support of fire incidents.

**Teams:**

Type 2 Incident Management Teams

Type 2 Buying Teams

**Aircraft:**

Type 3 Exclusive Use Helicopters

Exclusive Use SEATS

**Crews:**

Type 2 Crews

Type 2 IA Crews

**Overhead:**

Wildland Fire Modules

**Supply:**

Cache Vans

**Notification of Commitment of National & Area Resources**

(Refer to NMG 10)

Notification by phone to the Rocky Mountain Coordination Center of commitment of National and Area resources will be within 15 minutes of commitment.

Notifications will be done when the following circumstances occur:

- When National or Area Resources are committed internally to an incident or are no longer available for dispatch.
- When resource is available again.
- When resource location changes.
- When 50% of the smokejumpers at home bases are dispatched.

The RMA Resource Status information will be updated by each center for National and Area resources physically located within their area of influence on a daily basis.

(Refer to RMG 20)

## Notification/Communication

A mailing list will be used by dispatch centers within the RMA. The mailing list must at a minimum contain the following addresses:

PRIMARY	BACKUP
cormc@dms.nwcg.gov	
craig.dispatch@yahoo.com	
durangodispatch@yahoo.com	codrc@dms.nwcg.gov
fortcollinsdispatch@yahoo.com	
gjcdispatch@gmail.com	
montrosedispatch@yahoo.com	comtc@dms.nwcg.gov
pueblodispatch@yahoo.com	copbc@dms.nwcg.gov
sdgpc@dms.nwcg.gov	
cody_dispatch@yahoo.com	
casper_dispatch@yahoo.com	
wyrwc@dms.nwcg.gov	

The purpose of the notification/communication mailing lists is to provide units and centers with timely information in regard to resource information, and dispatch/coordination information sharing.

## Unable To Fill (UTF) Procedure

(Refer to NMG 10)

A 48-hour “unable to fill” policy exists nationally. RMC will return requests to the ordering dispatch center with a “UTF” 48 hours after receipt unless notified that the order can be filled.

## Standard Cubes, Weight, and Gear Policy Excluding Smokejumpers, Rappellers, and Helicopter Managers

(Refer to NMG 10, 60)

All personnel dispatched off their unit must conform to the following limitations:

- One frameless, soft pack not to exceed 45 pounds.
- Web gear or briefcase (not both) not to exceed 20 pounds.
- Maximum allowable crew weight, including equipment, is **5300** pounds.

All personnel baggage weights must be displayed separately from individual weights on flight manifests.

Pre-identified Type 1 IMT members are authorized additional weight not to exceed 300 pounds of equipment per team. The IC must designate in advance which team members are authorized additional weight and make this a matter of record.

For incidents within the RMA, the following exceptions on maximum weight limitations have been approved. National / Area maximum allowable supplemental Team weight is 300 pounds of equipment per team. This is due to aircraft weight balance requirements that will be adhered to when planning for mobilization/demobilization.

All personnel will adhere to weight limitations. Items that exceed weights will be shipped home at individual's expense. All personnel must also consider cube limitations.

### **Wildland Fire Weather Forecasts**

(Refer to NMG 10)

All Fire Weather forecasts will be disseminated to all fire fighting personnel. The Rocky Mountain Area has National Weather Service (NWS) offices that provide Fire Weather Forecasts in Denver, Grand Junction, and Pueblo, CO; Cheyenne and Riverton, WY; Aberdeen, Rapid City and Sioux Falls, SD; Billings, MT; Hastings, North Platte, and Omaha, NE; Springfield, MO; Dodge City, Goodland, Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita, KS. Each office issues annual operating guides which provide details about Fire Weather zones, operation dates, times, and terminology. Contact RMC or the NWS office for a current copy. The operations plan is maintained at RMC.

**RMA Mobilization Guide approved by:**

**Robert Jones**

Rocky Mountain Coordinating Group Chairperson

**April 15, 2012**

Date